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THE YELLOW FLAG.

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AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "NOBODY'S FORTUNE," &c. &c.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I. BREAKING THE NEWS.

DOCTOR HAUGHTON stared hard at his old friend, who had just made such an astounding announcement—stared hard, but said nothing. Naturally a reticent man, in his capacity of physician he had had a great many odd things confided to him in his life, and had consequently not merely learned the value of silence, but had almost lost the faculty of astonishment.

After a minute's pause he turned to the little crowd, and said in a quiet, business-like way, "Just four of you lift this poor gentleman's body, two at the head and two at the feet, and carry it over to the tavern I see on the other side of the road. Gibson," to the coachman, "you go with them and pay them for their trouble. See it properly placed on a bed or sofa somewhere, and have the door locked, and tell the landlord he will be properly paid, and that a hearse will come out and fetch it away this evening."

When Gibson returned and reported that all these directions had been properly obeyed, he mounted his box again, and the gentlemen, re-entering the carriage, drove off swiftly towards London, leaving the little crowd in the road gazing after them.

The gentlemen inside the brougham composed themselves comfortably, each in his corner, looking out of the window, and waiting for the other to speak. Each was most anxious to hear all that the other might have to tell him, but both knew the professional etiquette of caution so well that neither liked to be the first to com-

mence the conversation. At length Mr. Broadbent, who was a year or two younger, and considerably more impulsive than his friend, broke the silence by saying, in a casual manner, and as though the subject had but little interest for him, "Odd that I should have been talking to you about that man this morning, and that we should have come upon him just now, wasn't it?"

"Very odd; very odd indeed," said Doctor Haughton; "quite a coincidence! Odd thing, too, his going under two names. Mr. Calverley certainly could not be called an eccentric man."

"Nor could Mr. Claxton, so far as I have seen of him at least," said Mr. Broadbent; "a thoroughly steady-going man of business, I should say."

"Ah!" said Doctor Haughton. And then there was a pause, broken by the doctor's saying, as he looked straight out of the window before him, "No need in asking what made the man adopt this mystery and this alias, eh? A woman of course?"

"Well, there certainly is a Mrs. Claxton," said Mr. Broadbent, "and a very pretty woman too!"

"Poor creature, poor creature!" said Doctor Haughton; "such things as these always fall hardest upon them."

"Yes, it's a bad thing for her losing her husband," said Mr. Broadbent.

"Her husband," echoed Doctor Haughton. "I—I—I suppose every one at Hendon thought she was Calverley's wife?"

"Thought she was!" cried Mr. Broadbent; "do you mean to say she wasn't?"

"Why, my good friend," said Doctor Haughton, pushing his hat on the back of his head and staring at his companion, "there's a Mrs. Calverley at home in Great Walpole-street, whither we are now going,

to whom Calverley has been married for the last ten or fifteen years."

"Good Heaven!" cried Mr. Broadbent; "then that poor girl at Rose Cottage is—ah, poor child, poor child!" And he sighed and shook his head very sorrowfully. He knew at that moment that so soon as the story got wind he would have to brave his wife's anger, and the virtuous indignation of all his neighbours, who would be furious at having received him in their spotless domiciles after his attendance on such a "creature;" but his first emotions were pity for the girl, however erring she might be.

"Very distressing indeed," said Doctor Haughton, blowing his nose loudly. "It is a most extraordinary thing that men who are liable to a cardiac affection are not more careful in such matters. And the girl is pretty too, you say?"

"Very pretty, young, and interesting," said Mr. Broadbent, kindly.

"Ah!" commented Doctor Haughton; "doesn't resemble Mrs. Calverley much, as you will say when you see her. No doubt poor Calverley—however, that's neither here nor there. Do you know this is a remarkably unpleasant business, Broadbent?"

"It is indeed," said Mr. Broadbent, "and for both the families."

"Yes, and for us, my good friend," said Doctor Haughton, "for us, who have to break the news to one of them within the next half-hour. Where on earth can we say we found the man? I suppose he was living out at this box of his, wasn't he?"

"Yes, he has been there for the last few days. He was in the habit of passing a week or ten days there, and then going off, as Mrs. Claxton told me, on business journeys connected with the firm of which he was a partner."

"That exactly tallies with Calverley's own life. He was absent from his home about every fortnight to look after, as he said, some ironworks in the North. It is very little wonder that a man leading a double life of such enormous excitement should bring upon himself a cardiac attack. Such a steady sobersides as he looked too! Gad, Broadbent, I shouldn't be surprised if you were to turn out a Don Juan next."

"No fear of that," said Mr. Broadbent, with a half-smile; "but really this is a most unpleasant position for us. Where can we say we found the poor fellow? We cannot possibly tell Mrs. Calverley we picked him up on the roadside, as he was probably supposed by her to be travelling in the North.

And yet she must know the truth some day."

"Yes, but not yet," said Doctor Haughton, "nor need we take upon ourselves the trouble and anxiety of telling her. We can say to Mrs. Calverley that this poor man was found dead in a railway carriage, which she would be ready to believe, imagining him to be on his return from these iron-works. And then we could tell Mr. Gurnwood, a clergyman, her son by her former husband, who happens to be stopping in the house, how the matter really stands, and get him to explain it to her on some future occasion."

Mr. Broadbent agreed to this mechanically, for, indeed, he was but little concerned about Mrs. Calverley, and was wondering what would become of the poor little woman at Rose Cottage when she should hear the fearful news.

"And I'll tell you what, my dear Broadbent," continued Doctor Haughton, after a pause, "if you don't mind my giving you a little advice. I should let this young woman up at Hendon find out this news by herself—I mean to say I shouldn't tell her. No one knows that you know anything about it, and it is as well for a professional man to mix himself up in such matters under such circumstances as little as possible."

Mr. Broadbent again signified his assent. He was a kindly-hearted man, but he knew that from a worldly point of view his companion's advice was sound, and remembering Mrs. Broadbent's tongue, he determined to act upon it.

So the two gentlemen journeyed on until the carriage pulled up in front of the dull, grim, respectable house in Great Walpole-street, and there, feeling very nervous despite their professional training, they alighted.

There was no need to give their names, for the butler recognised Doctor Haughton at once, and ushered the gentlemen into the drawing-room, where Mrs. Calverley was seated alone, with the eternal Berlin wool frame in front of her. She looked up at the butler's announcement, rose from her seat, and stood with her hands crossed primly before her, waiting to receive her visitors.

Doctor Haughton advanced, and taking one of her cold flat hands shook it in a purely professional manner, and then let it drop. Nor could Mrs. Calverley, however acute she might have been, have gleaned any intelligence from the doctor's

look, which was also purely professional, and met her steely, blue eyes as though it were inspecting her tongue. But Mrs. Calverley was not acute, and she merely said, "How do you do, Doctor Haughton?" in her thin acid voice, and stared blankly at Mr. Broadbent, as though wondering how he came there.

"This is Mr. Broadbent, an old friend of mine, and a medical man of great experience, whose company I was fortunate enough to have on this very melancholy occasion."

Doctor Haughton laid great stress upon the last words, but Mrs. Calverley took them very calmly, merely saying "Yes?" and rubbing the palms of her silk mittens softly together.

"I am afraid I have not succeeded in making you understand, Mrs. Calverley, that a great misfortune has befallen you."

"The Swartmoor Ironworks," said Mrs. Calverley, suddenly brightening up. "I always said—but how could you know about them?"

"The calamity to which I am alluding is, I regret to say, much more serious than any mere business loss," replied Doctor Haughton, gravely. "Mr. Calverley has been out of town for some little time, I believe?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Calverley, becoming rigid with rage; "he is away carrying out some of those ridiculous schemes in which he wastes our money and—"

"Do not speak harshly, my dear madam," said the doctor, laying his hand upon her arm. "I am sure you will regret it! Mr. Calverley is very ill, dangerously ill."

Mrs. Calverley looked up sharply into his face. "Stop one minute, Doctor Haughton, if you please; I should wish my son, the Reverend Martin Gurwood, to be present at any communication you have to make to me respecting Mr. Calverley. He is somewhere in the house, I know. I will send for him." And she rang the bell.

"By all means," said Doctor Haughton, looking helplessly at Mr. Broadbent, and feeling how very much more difficult it would be to tell his white lie, prompted though it was by merciful consideration, in the presence of a clergyman.

In a few minutes Martin Gurwood entered the room. He knew Doctor Haughton, and shook hands with him, bowing to Mr. Broadbent, to whom he was introduced.

Doctor Haughton was beginning to make some communication to me about

Mr. Calverley," said Mrs. Calverley, "and I thought it better, Martin, that you should be present."

Martin Gurwood bowed, and looked inquiringly at the doctor.

"It is, I regret to say, a very painful communication," said Doctor Haughton, in answer to this mute appeal. "Mr. Calverley was found this afternoon in a very critical state in a—in a railway carriage on the—on the Great Northern line," said the doctor, with some little hesitation, feeling himself grow hot all over.

Mr. Broadbent, feeling the actual responsibility thus lifted from his shoulders, preserved a perfectly unruffled demeanour, and nodded his head in solemn corroboration.

"May I ask how you came to hear of this, Doctor Haughton?" said Martin.

"It so happened," said the doctor, "that I had been called in consultation to a case at—a short distance from town"—it would never do to name the exact place while this woman is present, he thought to himself—"and we were returning in the train when the discovery was made, and we at once offered our services, little thinking that the unfortunate sufferer would prove to be an acquaintance of mine."

"Some one must go to him at once," said Martin, looking hard at his mother.

"It is a great pity that Madame Du Tertre is not in the way just now when she is wanted," said Mrs. Calverley, quietly; "this seems exactly one of the occasions—"

"There is no necessity for any one to go," interrupted Doctor Haughton; "all that it is possible to do has been done."

"Do you consider Mr. Calverley to be in danger?" asked Martin, anxiously.

"In extreme danger," replied the doctor, and then catching Mr. Gurwood's eye, he endeavoured by the action of his mouth to frame the word "dead." But Mrs. Calverley's steely eyes were upon him at the same moment, and she guessed his meaning.

"You are endeavouring to deceive me, Doctor Haughton," said she, with her stoniest manner. "Mr. Calverley is dead."

"My dear mother," said Martin, leaving his chair, and putting his arms round her.

"I can bear it, Martin," said Mrs. Calverley, coldly; "this is not the first time I have known suffering. My life has been one long martyrdom."

"Is this true?" asked Martin, turning to the doctor.

"I regret to say it is," said Doctor

Haughton, "Out of consideration for Mrs. Calverley's feelings, I endeavoured to break the news as gently as possible, but it is better that she should know the truth as she does now."

"It is some consolation for me to think," said Mrs. Calverley, in measured tones, "that I never failed to utter my protest against these reckless journeys, and that if Mr. Calverley had not obstinately persisted in ignoring my advice, on that as on every other point, he might have been here at this moment."

"What was the immediate cause of death?" asked Martin Gurwood, hurriedly, for his mother's tone and manner jarred harshly on his ear.

"It is impossible to say without—with-out an examination," said the doctor, lowering his voice; "but I should say, from the mere cursory glance we had, that death probably arose from pericarditis—what you would know as disease of the heart."

"And that might be brought on by what?"

"It would probably be the remnant of some attack of rheumatic fever under which the deceased had suffered at some period of his life. But it has probably been accelerated or increased by excess of mental excitement or bodily fatigue."

"There need have been no question of excitement or fatigue either; if my advice had been followed," said Mrs. Calverley, with a defiant snif, "if Mr. Calverley had been more in his home—"

"Yes, mother; this is scarcely the time to enter into such questions," said Martin Gurwood, severely, for he was ashamed of his mother's peevish nagging. "What arrangements have you made, doctor, in regard to the body of our poor friend?"

"None whatever at present," said the doctor; "we did the best we could temporarily, but this is a matter in which I thought it would be better to speak with you—alone," he added, after a pause, glancing at Mrs. Calverley.

But that lady sat perfectly unmoved. "Will there be an inquest?" she asked.

"I trust not, madam," said the doctor, dryly, for he was much scandalised at Mrs. Calverley's hardness and composure. "I shall use all the influence I have to prevent any such inquiry, for the sake of the poor gentleman who is dead, and whom I always found a kind-hearted, liberal man."

"I know nothing about his liberality," said Mrs. Calverley, only exhibiting her appreciation of the doctor's tone by a slight

increase in the rigidity of her back; "but I know that, like most of his other virtues, it was never exhibited towards me, or in his own home."

"I never saw Mr. Calverley except in this house," remarked the doctor, angrily. Then turning to Martin, he said, "These arrangements that we spoke of, had we not better go into them?"

"I think so," said Martin. Then turning to Mrs. Calverley, he added, "My dear mother, I must have a little business talk with Doctor Haughton about some matters in connexion with this melancholy affair which it might perhaps be painful for you to listen to, and at which there is happily no necessity for your presence. Shall we go into the drawing-room or—"

"Pray don't trouble yourself, I will relieve you of my company at once," said Mrs. Calverley. And with a very small inclination to the visitors she rose and creaked out of the room.

The usual palor of Martin Gurwood's face was covered by a burning flush. "You must excuse my mother, Doctor Haughton, and you, too, if you please, sir," turning to Mr. Broadbent. "Her sphere in life has been very narrow, and I am constrained to admit that her manner is harsh and forbidding. But it is manner and nothing more."

"Some persons are in the habit of disguising the acuteness of their feelings under a rough exterior," said the doctor. "Mrs. Calverley may belong to that class. At all events subjects of this kind are better discussed without women, and we have a communication to make to you which it is absolutely necessary she should know nothing of, at least for the present."

Martin Gurwood rose from his chair and walked to the mantelpiece, where he stood for a moment, his head resting on his hand. When he turned round his face had resumed its usual pallor, was, indeed, if anything whiter than usual, as he said, "I have guessed from the first that you had something to say to me, and I have a fearful idea that I guess its purport. Mr. Calverley has committed suicide?"

"No, I think not, I certainly think not," said the doctor. "What do you say, Broadbent?"

"Most decidedly not," said Mr. Broadbent. "When I saw him yesterday, even in the cursory examination which I was able to make, I satisfied myself that there were symptoms of pericarditis, and I will stake my professional reputation it was that killed him."

"When you saw him yesterday?" repeated Martin Gurwood, looking blankly at the surgeon. "Why, yesterday he must have been in the North. It was on his return journey thence, as I understood, that he died in the train."

"Yes—exactly," said Doctor Haughton, "this is just the point where a little explanation is necessary. The fact is, my dear sir, that our poor friend did not die in the train at all, but on the public road, the high road leading to Hendon, where he lived."

"Where he lived!" cried Martin Gurwood. "You are speaking in riddles, which it is impossible for me to understand. I must ask you to be more explicit if you wish me to comprehend you."

"Well, then, the fact of the matter is that our poor friend for some years past has led a kind of double life. Here and in Mincing-lane he was, of course, Mr. Calverley, but at Hendon, where, as I said before, he sometimes lived, having a very pretty place there, he passed as Mr. Claxton."

"Claxton!" cried Martin. "I have heard that name before."

"Not unlikely," said the doctor. "It came to be understood that Mr. Claxton was a kind of sleeping partner in the firm. Our friend here," pointing to Mr. Broadbent, "thought so, as well as many others. No doubt the suggestion originated with the poor man himself, who thought that some day his connexion with the firm might crop up, and that this would prove a not ineffectual blind."

"What an extraordinary idea," said Martin Gurwood. "And he took this house at Hendon and lived there, you say, from time to time."

"Exactly," said Doctor Haughton, looking hard at him.

"As an occasional retreat doubtless, to which he could retire from the worries of business and—other things. You are a man of the world, Doctor Haughton, and though you have not been much at this house you must have remarked that my mother is somewhat exacting, and scarcely calculated to make a comfortable home for a man of poor Mr. Calverley's cheerful temperament. I can understand his not telling his wife of the existence of this little retreat."

"Yes—why—he," said Doctor Haughton, dryly. "There was another reason why he did not mention its existence to Mrs. Calverley. The fact is, that this little retreat had another occupant." And the

doctor paused and looked at Martin with a serio-comic expression.

"I am at a loss again," said the clergyman, "I do not understand you."

"My good sir," said Doctor Haughton, "your parish must lie a long way out of the world. Don't you comprehend? Mr. Calverley did not live alone in this rural box! There was a young woman there."

"What!" cried Martin Gurwood, staggering back against the mantelpiece. "Do you mean to say that this man, so looked up to and respected, has been living for years in open crime?"

"Scarcely in open crime, my good sir," said the doctor, "as is proved by the fact that it has been kept quiet so long. Moreover, he is gone, poor fellow, and though there can be no question of his guilt, there may have been what the lawyers call extenuating circumstances. I fancy from what I saw of him that Mr. Calverley was of all men inclined to be happy in his home had matters run smoothly."

"I think you are very right, sir," said Martin Gurwood, "and it is not for me to judge him, Heaven knows, nor," he added, seeing the doctor's eyes firmly fixed on him, "nor any other sinful man. You have so astonished me by your revelation that I feel myself almost incapable of any further action at present. You did perfectly right in concealing this dreadful story from my mother; she must be kept in ignorance of it as long as possible. Now, what else is there to be said?"

"Nothing, after you have given me the address of the undertakers you wish to employ."

"I know none in London, nor, I am sure, does my mother. You will be more accustomed to such matters, and I should be obliged to you to act for us."

"Very well," said Doctor Haughton. "I will give orders that the body be fetched from the tavern, where it is now lying, and brought here to-night. I will see you in a day or two, and I think you may trust to me for arranging the business, without any unpleasant legal inquiry under which the facts might possibly come to light."

Martin Gurwood shook hands with his retiring visitors, and followed them to the door, which he closed behind them and carefully locked. Then returning to the chair which he had occupied he fell on his knees beside it, and prayed long and fervently. He must have felt strong love for the man whose death and whose crime had just been revealed to him, the story just

narrated must have struck deeply into his soul, for when he lifted his face from between his hands where it had been buried, it was strained, and seared, and tear-blurred.

What was to be done? The dreadful news must be kept from Mrs. Calverley as long as possible, not, as Martin well enough knew, that her feelings towards the dead man would be wounded as almost any other woman's feelings would be wounded by the disclosure; not that in her case it would involve any shattering of the idol, any revulsion of love long concentrated on one earthly object, and at the last finding itself betrayed, but in fear lest the woman's ungovernable temper should break forth and blurt out to the whole world the story of her wrongs, and of her husband's dis-honour.

There was the other woman, too, the poor wretch who had been the sharer of that dishonour, who had been living with a man on whom she had no moral or legal claim, and who even now was all unconscious of the blow which had fallen upon him, cutting him off in the midst of his wickedness, and leaving her to the scorn and reprobation of the world. Martin Gurwood's large-souled pity had time to turn even to this outcast, as he thought of her; he pictured to himself the desolation which would fall upon that little home, and could not help contrasting it with the proper and conventional display of grief which had already commenced to reign in the house in which he sat.

Yes! Grief as understood by undertakers and mourning-warehouse keepers, which is a very different thing from grief as displayed in red eyelids and swollen cheeks, in numbed feelings and dumb carelessness as to all that may happen, had begun to reign in the mansion in Great Walpole-street. The blinds had all been drawn down, and the servants stole about noiselessly on tiptoe. It was felt to be a time when people required keeping up, and the butler had opened a bottle of John Calverley's particular Madeira, and the cook had announced her intention of adding something special to the ordinary supper fare. Mrs. Calverley had retired to her bedroom, and announced that she would see no one save Madame Du Tertre, who was to be shown up directly she returned. And about seven o'clock in the murky autumnal evening, there was a noise of wheels and a low knock, and it arrived, and was borne in its shell on men's shoulders up the creaking stairs to

an unused room on the second floor, where it was left alone. There it lay deserted by all; it that had been young John Calverley, the worshipped treasure of the old mother long since passed away; it that had been the revered head of the great City house of Calverley and Company, of world-wide fame and never tarnished renown; it that had been "dear old John," so passionately loved by Alice Claxton, who was even now looking out into the dark night from her cottage-porch, and wondering whether her husband had gone off on business or whether he would return.

Long before it was brought there, Mr. Jeffreys had arrived from the City, had had an interview with Mr. Gurwood, in which he learned of his principal's sudden death. As Mr. Jeffreys came down the steps he met a lady going up, a lady who seemed in a state of great excitement, and who asked the footman standing at the hall-door what had happened.

The footman was concise in his reply. "Mr. Calverley is dead, mum," he said. "And Mrs. Calverley wished to see Madame Doo Turt as soon as possible."

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

THE WESLEY FAMILY GHOST.

In the month of December, 1716, the family of the Reverend Samuel Wesley (father of the celebrated John Wesley), vicar of Epworth, a Lincolnshire village inhabited by flax-growers, was much disturbed by sounds that, with the simple credulity of those days, were without hesitation set down as supernatural.

Mr. Wesley, an elderly man of the old High Church principles, had in his youth produced some inflated poems, which Pope at one time intended to ridicule in the Dunciad. As poor as Goldsmith's delightful vicar, the good man was as easy to deceive; and his Presbyterian parishioners had long persecuted him with untiring malignity. These rough fen-men had houghed his cattle, injured his horses, and even threatened his life. In extreme poverty the good old parson had consoled himself with his Hebrew books and his verses; and, aided by an excellent wife, had spent his time in educating his large family of sons and daughters, and trying to soften and civilise the coarse flax-growers, who hated everything he had been taught to love, honour, and admire. In faith and in the pursuit of duty he had pitched his tent among the sons of Kedar, and no threats

or violence could induce him to quit that stony place or those scoffing people. That he, a poor obscure village clergyman, should have been selected for what he considered undoubted supernatural sounds and phenomena, no doubt marked him out, in his own opinion, as a person destined to exercise great spiritual influence. He was a man of courage, however, and he set himself to observe the phenomena as became their extraordinary significance and importance.

It was on the 21st of December, a little before one A.M., that this worthy man was awoken by nine distinct knocks, which seemed to come from the room next to his own. After every third knock there was a distinct pause. The rector, awakening his wife, sat up in bed and quietly discussed the sounds. He pronounced at once that it was some drunken or mischievous disturber outside the house, and remembering his stout mastiff chained below, believed he could easily frighten off any would-be thief. The next night, however, the rector was again awoken, after he had been in bed and asleep some three hours, by the same sounds; but this time there were only six knocks, and they were fainter than before. Nothing else was heard. On the morning of Sunday, the 23rd, however, the alarm spread, for, about seven in the dim morning, the rector's daughter Emily called her mother in a frightened and sudden way into the nursery, and told her that the strange noises could then be heard there. The careful mother instantly went, and, sure enough, heard the sounds first near the bed and then under the bed. When Mrs. Wesley knocked, tentatively, she was answered by a rap, and when she looked under the bed, "something like a badger" ran out and escaped.

After this the daughters confessed at breakfast that ever since the 1st of December they had heard strange noises, groans, and knockings in nearly every room of the house. Susannah and Anne Wesley, when below stairs in the dining-room, had heard, first at the door, then over their head, and under their feet, strange rappings from rooms which were at the time empty. Emily Wesley, coming down-stairs one night at ten o'clock, to methodically "draw up" the clock and lock the doors as usual in that regular family, heard under the staircase a crash among some bottles; yet when she looked nothing was broken and nothing was there. Raps had also been heard by the servants in both kitchens, at the doors, against a

partition, and overhead, while one of the maids had distinguished groans as of a dying man at all hours of the night. Footsteps had been heard as if some one were going up and down stairs, and there had been "vast rumblings" below stairs as well as in the garrets. A man who slept in the garret had heard some one pass his bed, and apparently disturb his shoes, though there were none there. There had also been heard a gobbling like a turkey-cock, noises in the nursery, and apparent dancing in a locked-up matted chamber next the nursery. Mrs. Wesley had at first persuaded her daughters and the servants that rats inside, or drunken people outside the house, were the only disturbers; but fear soon converted her to the general notion of a ghost. But why not have told before the father, husband, master, and general protector? The reason was, that there prevailed a village superstition that no person to whom such noises boded ill could ever hear them. Now that they had increased, and were the universal wonder and terror of the house, now, moreover, that Mr. Wesley himself had heard them, no further concealment was possible or necessary. Besides, the spirits could have no power unless it was given them from above. To warn or exorcise these dumb and foolish spirits would indeed be a great privilege, thought Mr. Wesley, in the natural pride of the moment.

The night after the appearance of the badger under the nursery bed, the noises broke out about one o'clock with triumphant violence. There was no hope of sleep. Bravely the rector arose, and his wife insisted on sharing his danger. The two went together into every room up and down stairs, and in nearly every chamber they entered they heard the noises in the room they had just left. At the bottom of the stairs they heard the crash Emily had described among the bottles, as if they had been all broken to pieces, and then a jangling splash, as though a peck of money had been emptied at their feet. They then went cautiously through the hall into the kitchen, and there they rather shuddered to see the big mastiff come whining towards them. It had never, indeed, barked since the first night. Only supernatural and unseen visitors, the rector argued, could have so alarmed a ferocious dog. The mastiff appeared more frightened than the children. The rector, and his wife also, heard "rattling and thundering" in every room of the house except his study, where as yet the vexatious ghost had not

intruded. After about an hour the worthy and credulous pair returned to bed. The satisfied ghost did not materially disturb them any more that night. On Wednesday, December the 26th, a little before ten, Emily Wesley heard in the nursery a sound which usually preceded the noises, a vibration like the difficult winding up of a jack. Calling her father and mother, they all listened, and there came raps from below at the bed foot and head, and under the bed. The rector then went down-stairs, and knocked with his stick at the smoky joists of the kitchen ceiling. The ghost answered as often as it was questioned. But when the rector knocked a peculiar change, such as he used to do at his own door (one—two, three, four, five, six—seven), it seemed to puzzle the mimetic ghost, who failed to answer it in the same manner, though the children afterwards heard it give the same kind of tat-tat two or three times on other occasions.

Going anxiously into the nursery, the rector found the knocking under the bed and at the bed's head continuing intermittently, the children starting and moving in their sleep, and at last awaking. The good father staying there alone to guard them, bade them go quietly to sleep again, and sat at the bed's foot watching them. When the sounds began again Mr. Wesley very gravely asked the ghost who he was, and why he disturbed innocent children, and did not come to him in his study, in a decorous way, and there tell him plainly what he wanted. Soon after there came a farewell knock at the outside of the house, and then the purposeless ghost "knocked off" for the night.

During these visitations, when Mr. Wesley, at prayers, mentioned the names of King George the First and the prince, "Jeffrey," as the family, by this time growing accustomed to the troublesome ghost, began to familiarly call the spirit, would make a great noise overhead, so that he was shrewdly suspected of being a Jacobite. Three times (probably in the dark) the astonished rector was pushed, by "invisible power," once against the corner of his study desk, once against the door of the matted chamber (a favourite haunt of Jeffrey), and a third time against the right-hand side of his study door as he was going in. At all hours, day and night, with lights and without, the puzzled rector followed the noises through every room of his house, alone, and with others, waiting to interrogate the spirit, and entreating it

to answer. Yet on no occasion did there come any articulate voice, and only once or twice two or three feeble squeaks, like the loud chirping of a bird, which were probably only caused by rats.

On Friday, December 28th, Mr. Wesley had to pay a visit to a friend, but the noises were so boisterous on the Thursday night that he did not care to leave his startled family. A Mr. Hoole, of Haxey, came therefore at his request, and spent the Friday night with him. Soon after ten the sounds began as usual, and the same performances were gone through.

From that time till January 24th Jeffrey was quiet. That morning, when the prayer for the king was read, there were the usual protesting knocks. At night, when the king and prince were mentioned, they came again, and louder, and one very loud knock at the "Amen" was heard at the door. After nine, Robert Brown, the servant-man, sitting alone by the kitchen fire, saw, as clearly as eyes can see anything, something like a small rabbit come out of the copper-hole, with its ears down, and dart up and run round in a circle five times. Robert ran after it with the tongs, but, losing it, grew frightened, and ran to tell one of the maids in the parlour. On Friday, the 25th, there being prayers at church, Mr. Wesley left out the prayers for the king and prince at home, and at this concession to Jeffrey there was no knocking. One morning, on reviving King George and the prince, the interruption began again, and eleven persons in the room distinctly heard the knocks. One night, directly Mr. Wesley spoke to the noises, they ceased. Gradually the family grew more indifferent to the sounds, and about the end of January, 1717, they ceased.

This is the old rector's version of the ghost. The view taken by Mrs. Wesley, and gathered from letters to her son Samuel, then an usher at Westminster School, is somewhat different, and presents the story in a somewhat new aspect.

On the 1st of December, a little before ten, one of the maids and Robin, sitting in a snug room opening on the garden heard knocks and groans at the door. Twice or three times they opened the door, but found no one. Startled at this, they rose and told Mrs. Wesley, who laughed at their foolish fears, and sent them to bed. Two or three nights afterwards the knocking began, sometimes in the garret, but most commonly in the nursery,

or green chamber. Mrs. Wesley, who had heard that frequent blowing a horn often frightened away rats, to whom she attributed these visitations, ordered one to be sent for. Molly Wesley was very much opposed to this, as she argued with girlish vivacity that, if the disturber were supernatural, he would feel hurt at it, and, growing angry, become more troublesome. And so it proved; for after the horn was blown in the garrets the noises, which before had only been at night, were now heard at all hours. The mother and girls all this time pretended to keep their hearts up, but were really miserable, concluding that the knocking was a warning of Mr. Wesley's death, as he alone had not yet heard it. On telling Mr. Wesley, he grew very angry, and said to his wife :

"Sukey, I am ashamed of you; these boys and girls fright one another, but you are a woman of sense, and should know better. Let me hear no more of it."

At prayers that very day, at six P.M., during the prayer for the king, he first heard the knockings. The same day Mrs. Wesley heard a cradle violently rocking in the nursery, where no cradle had been for some years. So convinced was she that this sound was preternatural that she earnestly prayed it might not disturb her in her own chamber, in her hours of retirement; and it never did. Sometimes the noise, which continued for hours together, was like that made by a carpenter planing planks. One night in the dark, in the nursery, Mr. Wesley adjured the spirit to speak if it had the power, and tell him why he troubled the house. He questioned it also as to whether it was his son Samuel, and begged it, if it could not speak, to knock, but no response was made. All this time Mrs. Wesley was fearing that her brother in India was dead, but he was not, though some time after he went up the country, before returning to England with his wealth, and disappeared for ever. Once, when Mrs. Wesley asked the ghost to answer her, it replied with knocks to the stamps she gave on the nursery floor. Kezzy Wesley, a little girl of seven, then said, "Let it answer me, too, if it can;" and every time she stamped her little foot the spirit replied. On looking under the bed something "pretty much like a badger" ran out under Emily's petticoats. Another night there came nine strokes near the bed, as if some one had beaten with an oak stick upon a chest. Mr. and Mrs. Wesley also constantly heard sounds as if some

one were running down the garret stairs; down the broad stairs; then up the narrow ones into the garret, and so over and over again. The rooms trembled all the time, and the doors shook till the latches clattered.

Emily Wesley's experiences differ from those of her mother. She did not hear the noises for a fortnight after the rest. One night, however, when she went from her mother's room to the best chamber to fetch her sister's candle, she heard the doors and windows shake, and a sound in the kitchen as if a vast piece of coal had been thrown down and smashed. She went down with the candle, but could see nothing; still the knocking began in every place just after she had passed it. The latch of the back-kitchen door lifted in her hand, but she locked the door, and saw nothing, though something resisted her pressure. At last the sounds became intermittent, and would come only on the outside of the house, and passed further and further off till they ceased altogether.

The same night that Emily Wesley heard the lump of coal shatter in the kitchen, and the bottles knock their heads together under the stairs, her sister Hetty was sitting waiting on the lowest step of the garret stairs for her father going to bed, the stair-door being shut behind her back. Suddenly there came down behind her "something like a man" in a loose night-gown trailing after him, which made her fly, rather than run, to Emily in the nursery. When Mr. Wesley was first told of these noises, Emily says, he smiled incredulously, imputed it to their romping, or to some lovers of theirs, and was more careful than usual from that time to see them safe in their bedrooms. This made the girls especially anxious for a continuance of Jeffrey's visits, that their father should be convinced that they were not in fault. Emily's theory was that the whole affair was caused by witches, for witchcraft had recently been detected in a neighbouring town. Moreover, Mr. Wesley had for several Sundays preached against the habit of consulting cunning men which prevailed among the poor people of Epworth, and this had perhaps vexed the witches. The badger-shaped creature seen by Mrs. Wesley, as Emily deposed in her letters to her brother at Westminster, was observed another evening by the man-servant sitting by the dining-room fire, and when the man entered it ran past him, through the hall, and under the stairs. He followed and searched for it

with a candle, but it had disappeared. The white rabbit seen in the kitchen, Emily Wesley so firmly believed to be a witch, that she says, "I would venture to fire a pistol at it if I saw it long enough." The initiatory signal sound Emily describes as "like the running of wheels, and the creaking of ironwork," and says that the knocks produced hollow and loud sounds that none of the girls could imitate.

From Molly Wesley we have a new aspect of the matter. The first thing she heard of the ghost was on the aforesaid December the 1st, when Fanny Marshall, the maid-servant, came running to her in the dining-room with a bowl of butter in her hand, to tell her she heard groans in the hall as of a dying man. A fortnight after, as Molly Wesley sat reading at the table, just before going to bed, her sister Sukey began telling her how, the day before, she had been frightened in the dining-room by a noise first at the folding-door, and then overhead. Molly had just replied that she did not believe a word of it, when at that moment Jeffrey rapped immediately under her feet. The two girls, frightened at this, hurried to bed, when just as they lay down, a great copper warming-pan at their bedside jarred and rang, and the latch of the door began to dance up and down. After this there was a sound as of a great iron chain falling on the outside of the door, and then, in infernal accordance, door-latch, hinges, warming-pan, and windows, all shook and clattered, and the house had a trembling fit from top to bottom. A few days after, between five and six in the evening, Molly Wesley being alone in the dining-room, the door seemed to open, though it really remained shut, and somebody seemed to walk in in a trailing night-gown, and pass leisurely round her, yet nothing visible actually appeared. Molly at once started off, ran up-stairs to her mother's room, and told her the story. Constantly the latch of a door would lift as she was about to touch it. Molly was present that night when her father left the family in the matted chamber, and went alone in the dark into the nursery, where the ghost was knocking. It remained silent when he asked it why it came, at which Mr. Wesley, says Molly, grew very angry, spoke sharply, called it a deaf and dumb devil, and repeated the adjuration. Molly and her sisters, huddled together in the outer and lighted room, were all this time trembling, lest the ghost should speak; but the only reply it deigned was a tre-

mendous knock on the bed's head, that seemed as if it would break it to shivers.

Sukey Wesley's experiences were in many respects different. Sukey first heard the sounds one night when she was working in the best parlour, and knowing the room below was locked, she was so frightened that she leaped into bed with all her clothes on. One night hearing the noises loudest in the nursery, this brave girl resolved to go and sleep there. Late at night several violent knocks were given on the two lowest steps of the garret stairs, close to the nursery door. Then the door-latch seemed to dance about as if mad, and knocks began on the floor about a yard from the door. The sounds came gradually towards Hetty Wesley's bed, and Hetty trembled violently in her sleep. It then beat three loud strokes on the bed's head. Mr. Wesley soon came up and adjured it, but it continued knocking, then removed to the room overhead, and beat furiously in reply to Mr. Wesley's interrogative knocks. Sukey, fairly scared at this, fled to her sister Emily's room, from whence they could hear the noises continuing in the nursery. Sukey, a little rallying, and the roses returning to her cheeks, now proposed a game at cards to beguile the vigil; but they had no sooner dealt the cards than Jeffrey, indignant at such contempt, began knocking under their feet. They then left off playing, and the noises returned to the nursery. One Sunday, in Sukey Wesley's sight, her father's trenched began to dance on the dinner-table till "an adventurous wretch took it up and spoiled the sport."

Nancy Wesley wrote her own impressions of the ghost to her brother John, then at school. The first time she heard Jeffrey was the night her mother ordered her to go up in the garret in the dark and blow a horn to frighten away the rats, as that plan had answered at a neighbour's house. The poor girl, terribly afraid, knelt down on the garret stairs, praying that as she did not do it to please herself the ghost might have no power over her. As soon as she got into the room the sounds ceased, but an hour or two afterwards they began more furiously than ever. There used to be steps as of a person following her when she passed in the daytime from room to room. The ghost would track her from one side of the bed to the other, and repeated every noise. Once as she was sitting on a press-bed, playing at cards with her sisters Molly, Hetty, Patty, and Kezzy, the

bed was lifted up with her on it. She had grown careless of the ghosts, and only said, as she leaped down laughing, "Surely old Jeffrey would not run away with me." Her sisters then persuaded her to sit down again, on which the bed was again lifted several times a great height. After this nobody could be induced to sit down on the bed any more. Whenever any of the family mentioned a certain Mr. J., the knocking began and continued to do so till they changed the discourse. Whenever Sukey Wesley wrote to Mr. J. the sounds began, and the night she set out for London to see him, Jeffrey knocked till morning without any intermission. It was always observed that the noises were oftenest near Hetty Wesley, and she was frightened because Jeffrey seemed to have a special spite against her.

Robin Brown, Mr. Wesley's man, took a very narrow view of the matter. The first time he heard it, he says, he was fetching down some corn from the garret, when some invisible thing knocked at a door just by him, and made him run down-stairs in a fright. Frequently somebody, apparently in jack-boots and a trailing night-gown, came through his bedroom, stumbling over the shoes by the bedside, and gobbling like a turkey-cock. Resolved to be too sharp for the ghost, Robin one night left his shoes and boots down-stairs, and took a large mastiff, newly bought, to bed with him; but the ghost came just the same, and seemed to stumble over as many as forty mortal pairs of boots. The dog crept into bed, and made such a howling and barking together, in spite of all the man could do, as to alarm all the family. One day, when grinding corn in the garret, when he stopped the handle of the mill, it went round of itself very swiftly. Nothing, Robin used to say afterwards, vexed him so much as that the mill was empty at the time, for if there had been corn in the mill old Jeffrey might have ground his heart out without his disturbing him. One day Betty Massy, a fellow-servant, denying all belief in old Jeffrey, Robin tapped the ceiling of the dining-room where they were three times with a reel he had in his hand, and the knocks were at once repeated, till the house shook again, and Betty begged and prayed him not to knock any more, for fear the ghost should appear corporeally.

A few more facts about the ghost we draw from memoranda collected by the celebrated John Wesley, then only a boy.

"The knocks always came," he says, "before any signal misfortune happened to the family, or before any illness." The neighbours opposite often listened, but could hear nothing. Once Mr. Wesley was going to fire a pistol at the place from whence the sound came, but Mr. Hoole being there, caught his arm and said:

"Sir, you are convinced this is something preternatural. If so, you cannot hurt it, but you give it power to hurt you."

The next evening, when Mr. Wesley adjured the spirit, he said to his daughter Nancy :

"These spirits love darkness. Put out the candle, and perhaps it will then speak."

The knocking continued, but still there was no articulate reply. Mr. Wesley then said :

"Nancy, two Christians are an overmatch for the devil. Go all of you down-stairs but Nancy; it may be when we are alone he will have the courage to speak." Mr. Wesley then said, "If thou art the spirit of my son Samuel, I pray knock three knocks, and no more."

Nancy Wesley, only fifteen, was sore afraid at this, but the spirit never answered. But in the daytime, when it followed her through the rooms, imitating her sweeping, she felt no fear; only she wished he had gone before her, and so saved her the trouble. Gradually all the sisters grew accustomed to the disturbance, and when a gentle tapping came at their bed-head about ten, they used only to say, "Jeffrey is coming; it is time to go to sleep." And as for Kezzy Wesley, the youngest child, directly she heard Jeffrey was knocking up-stairs, she used to run up and pursue him from room to room.

The following phenomena attended these sounds. 1. A wind outside the house rose when they began, and increased as they continued. 2. The first signal was usually heard at the top corner of the nursery. 3. The windows clattered and metal rang before the sounds began, and in every room the ghost entered. 4. Whatever noise was made, the dead hollow rap was heard clearly over all. 5. The sound, not to be imitated, was often heard in the air and in the middle of a room. 6. The ghost never really moved anything except the door-latches, except once, when it opened the nursery door and lifted a bed. 7. It began nearly always at a quarter to ten. 8. The mastiff dog only barked once at it. After that it always whined or ran and hid itself.

Thirty - four years afterwards, Emily Wesley, then the wife of an apothecary near London, believed that Jeffrey still warned her of coming misfortunes.

And now as to the cause of these noises. All the Wesleys believed that the ghost was a "messenger of Satan," sent to buffet their father for having, in 1701, left his wife for a whole year because she would call King William the Prince of Orange. But Doctor Adam Clarke, Wesley's biographer, mentions a story, "respectably related," though treated slightly by him, which seems to furnish a better clue to the noisy ghost. The story is this :

The Wesley family having retired one evening rather earlier than usual, one of the maids, who was finishing her work in the back kitchen, heard a noise, and presently saw a man working himself through a trough, which communicated between the sink-stone within and the cistern on the outside of the house. Astonished and terrified beyond measure, she, in a sort of desperation, seized the cleaver, which lay on the sink-stone, and gave him a violent and, probably, a mortal blow on the head; she then uttered a dismal shriek and fell senseless on the floor. Mr. Wesley being alarmed at the noise, supposing the house was beset by robbers, rose up, caught up the fire-irons of his study, and began to throw them with violence down the stairs, calling out, "Tom ! Jack ! Harry !" &c., as loud as he could bawl ; designing thus to intimidate the robbers. Who the man was that received the blow, or who were his accomplices, was never discovered. His companions had carried him off; footsteps and marks of blood were traced to some distance, but not far enough to find who the villains were, or from whence they came.

Ten years before, the dissenting parishioners had stabbed Mr. Wesley's cows, mutilated his house-dog, threatened his life, burnt his flax, thrown him into Lincoln gaol, stripped him of the chaplaincy of Colonel Lepelle's regiment, fired off guns under the rectory window, and threatened to turn his wife and children out of their house. The servants during the ghost affair were both new ones, why might not the rough fen-men have sought this fresh opportunity of rousing the good man's fears and driving him from the place? Doctor Priestley, into whose hands these ghost documents fell, and who published them, pronounced the whole business a mere trick and imposture. The noises could have been

produced by the servants or the maid's lover, and the animals seen were probably real rabbits and badgers turned loose in the house to aggravate the disturbance. The plate-breaking ghost has been often detected to be a mischievous servant, why not suspect servants of planning the rapping ghost, whose coming led to nothing, and to whom speech was denied ? Modern spiritualists, who spend their lives in furbishing up old superstitions, are never tired of quoting the Epworth ghost as the most irrefragable and unanswerable of his species? They tell you calmly that the simple solution of the matter is, that Wesley's daughter was a great medium, and that wherever she was these rappings would have come. Glorifying in any story that aids superstition, they gloat over these silly tricks, and hold them up as proving their own claims. For the excited imagination of a simple-hearted and credulous family, who believed in witches, they make no allowance ; the religious faculty of the Wesleys, morbidly active and strengthened by a retired life, they altogether ignore. The fact certainly remains, that for so many days at Epworth rectory, in the years 1716-17, certain noises, supposed to be supernatural, began, and that after a time, when the family grew indifferent to them, they ceased. No result was obtained by them, they warned, guided, reproved no one, they only frightened some girls and puzzled some men. Let no one who has not lived in old timber houses and heard the unearthly rushes, rattles, clatters, gnawings, and rappings produced by rats, say that those vermin were not enough alone to produce two-thirds of the sounds heard by the Wesley family. Let our solution be right or wrong, Doctor Priestley says truly of the whole story that "it is perhaps the best authenticated and the best told story of the kind that is anywhere extant ; on which account, and to exercise the ingenuity of some speculative persons, he thought it not undeserving of being published." And for the same reason we give it in this place, with more grains of salt added, however, than any spiritualist salt-cellars can conveniently hold.

BY THE URE.

WHERE the purple heights of Hambledon stand clear
against the sky,
Where the great trees bow their mighty heads, as the
winds go wailing by,
Where the rain falls fast and heavy, on moorland and
on lea,
The Ure with all her tribute streams chafes onward to
the sea.

Down from bonnie Wensleydale, past bracken, brush,
and fern,
By many a moorside homestead, by many a sparkling
burn,
By minster and grey abbey, by ivied village fane,
Full fraught with inland whisperings, Ure flashes to
the main.
She tells how Spring's gay summons is calling thickly
forth
Bright buds and fresh green leaflets, in the copses of
the north.
She tells how birds are mating in every coppice lone,
How glowing flowers, like scattered gems, on meadow
lands are strown :
How children fling upon her, from many a crumbling
arch,
Pale primrose-leaves and black ash-buds, first-fruits of
boisterous March.
She tells how sun and shadow fast fleck her glittering
breast,
Meet heralds of sweet April, in her changeful garments
drest.
But, dares she bear old ocean a hint of what she left,
Where the willows droop their silvery haze, above a
grassy cleft,
Where mid violet tufts, and aconites, and daises red
and white,
A fairer floweret than them all was left, alone, at
night.
Ah, pretty babe, no mother's love to lap thee soft and
warm,
No tender hands to tend and guard the tiny fragile
form,
Only the quick rain's pitying tears upon thy rest were
shed,
The Ure to sing thy lullaby, the blossoms for thy bed !
Where lurked the bitter story of woe, and shame, and
sin ?
In grey old grange, or village street, or dull town's
weary din ?
Mid the cruel or the careless, cold rich or sullen poor ?
While the murdered baby lay serene beside the rushing
Ure.
Ah, saved from life and sorrow, poor pretty helpless
waif ;
Let it sleep beneath the fresh spring grass, from harm
and trouble safe.
But I think, though fast our busy life forgets a tale of
wrong,
One ear will shrink, while hearing lasts, from the rest-
less river's song !

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

" You will scarcely believe me, perhaps," exclaimed Maximilian, with a most beaming countenance, " when I assure you that the stories of the Sleeping Beauty and of Snowdrop are precisely identical."

" Stop a moment," said Laurence. " Let us bethink ourselves a little, before we begin to discuss your remarkable proposition. Snowdrop was first made known to us Britons when a collection of Grimm's popular German stories was translated and published with illustrations by Mr. George Cruikshank.

" Nearly fifty years ago," interposed Edgar. " The German name of the story was Schneeweißchen."

" Stick to the dialect," insinuated Maximilian, " and say Sneeewittchen."

" Anything to please," remarked Laurence. " As for the Sleeping Beauty, she is known to everybody, figuring as she does in those tales of Mother Goose, which I, by no means a chicken, read when I was a very small boy."

" That Mother Goose of yours," snarled Edgar, " is simply Charles Perrault, who flourished in the days of Louis the Fourteenth."

" Psha !" ejaculated Laurence. " Perrault knew Mother Goose as well as I do, and as you don't. In one of the early editions of his immortal tales, there was a frontispiece on which was depicted an old goose telling them to her goslings."

" Strange fellow that Perrault," observed Maximilian with a sigh. " He revived for a degenerate age the most popular stories of the inhabited globe, and none knew whence he had gotten them. The big-wigs in the days of the Great Monarch believed that he invented them himself."

" Well, don't be hard on our benefactor," pleaded Laurence, " if he did not know whence he had derived his stories. There is many an honest gentleman, now-a-days, who is perfectly aware of the foreign source of his forthcomings, and pretends to be original notwithstanding."

" We are wandering from our subject, as we frequently do," objected Maximilian. " Come now. You say that the story of the Sleeping Beauty, as told by Charles Perrault, alias Mother Goose, is known to everybody. Are you quite certain that you know it yourselves ?"

" Perfectly," shouted Laurence and Edgar, with exceeding force.

" Tell it with becoming humility, and give us a taste of your quality," suggested Maximilian.

" Good, I'll represent both of us," said Laurence. " There was a certain lady, who, blest with an unexpected daughter, invited the fairies to her christening. They all promised the child all sorts of good things, but there was one cantankerous old fairy, who had not received an invitation, and who dropped in to predict that the little princess would pierce her hand with a distaff, and consequently die. A young fairy coming opportunely forward, declared that the death should be commuted for a sleep of one hundred years. The king forbade the use of distaffs among his subjects under pain of death, but nevertheless some miserable old lady, unmindful of the

decree, employed the prohibited instrument in the palace, and the young princess, aged sixteen, ingeniously contrived to run it through her hand, and slept accordingly. When the hundred years had expired, the crown-prince of a strange family, that had come to the throne in the meanwhile, chanced to stray into the wood in which the palace of the fair sleeper was situated. At his approach she awoke, and he married her."

"Bravo. And they lived happily together ever afterwards, didn't they?" cried Maximilian. "Are you quite sure you are at the end of the story?"

"I remember," replied Edgar, evasively, "that I once saw a very admirable dramatic version of the tale by Mr. Planché, in which he left off at the very point at which I have arrived."

"Of course he did," retorted Maximilian, "Mr. Planché, as a dramatic artist, knew well enough that the rest of the story could not so readily have accommodated itself to plot. But Mr. Planché, as an archæologist, who has translated the tales of Perrault, and illustrated them with erudite notes, would have told you, had he been here, that you had stopped short. Don't you recollect that the prince, though the Sleeping Beauty had presented him with a daughter named Morning, and a son named Day, kept his marriage secret during the lifetime of the king his father, because he feared the cannibal propensities of his mother, who was supposed to be an ogress?"

"To be sure I do," exclaimed Laurence. "And on the death of the old king the young one brought his wife and children to court with great magnificence, and very inconsistently committed them to the care of his mother, while he made war on a neighbouring potentate."

"Of course," said Edgar, "it's all clear when one comes to think of it. The queen-mother, left to her own devices, soon revealed her mischievous propensities, and would successively have eaten the two children and her daughter-in-law, had not a soft-hearted major-domo concealed the intended victims in his own apartment, and deceived his mistress by serving up other dainties."

"At last," added Laurence, "little Day, about to receive a wholesome castigation from his mamma, set up a cry, which reached the ears of the ogress, who would have thrown the young queen and her children into a tub filled with toads and vipers, had not her son returned home just

in time to prevent the atrocity, whereupon his evil mother flung herself into the midst of the reptiles, and was devoured at once."

"How could we have forgotten all this, even for a moment?" inquired Edgar.

"Because," answered Laurence, "this supplementary tale of the queen and her two children does not seem to grow naturally out of the narrative of the Sleeping Beauty, but to be an independent story, accidentally tacked on."

"That sort of tacking is by no means uncommon," observed Maximilian: "but I am prepared to show that it has not taken place. In this particular instance, the stories of the Sleeping Beauty and her children being parts of one indivisible entirety. First, however, let me recal to your memories Grimm's tale of Snowdrop, which, though pretty generally known, is less familiar than the other. Snowdrop, you may remember, was the lovely daughter of a queen, who pricked her finger while working on a snowy day at a window with an ebony frame, and wished she might have a child as white as snow, red as blood, and black as ebony. The wish having been granted by the birth of an infant with fair skin, rosy cheeks, and black hair, the good queen died, and the king, her husband, took unto himself another wife, whose magic mirror assured her that she was the loveliest lady in all the land, and repeated the comforting assurance till Snowdrop had completed her seventh year, when it provokingly told its royal mistress that, though she was fair, her step-daughter was a thousand times handsomer. In the rage natural to jealous stepmothers, the queen ordered a confidential huntsman to take Snowdrop into a wood, and there murder her. The rather good man was so far compassionate that, instead of killing the little girl himself, he left her to be devoured by wild beasts; but finding herself alone, she strayed about, till she arrived at a small house inhabited by seven kindly dwarfs, who took pity on her, and employed her as their servant, warning her against the possible machinations of the queen. That wicked lady learned from her glass the place of Snowdrop's retreat, and disguising herself as a pedlar, called at the house of the dwarfs during their absence, and persuaded the girl to purchase a stay-lace, which she fastened so tight that apparent death was the result. The dwarfs, on their return, restored animation by loosening the stay-lace; and they were equally successful

when, on another occasion, the queen had induced Snowdrop to put on a poisoned comb. A poisoned apple, which the queen brought on a third occasion, proved, however, too much for them. Snowdrop was not to be restored by any available means, and the benevolent dwarfs placed her body in a glass coffin, which each of them guarded in turn, and on which was staled, in golden letters, that she was the daughter of a king. A prince accidentally coming to the spot, became enamoured of the deceased beauty, and persuaded the dwarfs to make him a present of the coffin. This was carried on the shoulders of his servants, who happened to stumble, and a poisoned apple-pip falling from the lips of Snowdrop, she was at once restored to life, and, of course, married the prince. The wicked queen was invited to the wedding-feast, and forced to dance in red-hot iron shoes till she died."

"And that is the whole story?" said Edgar. "Well, there is a sort of resemblance between the resuscitation of Snowdrop and the waking of the Sleeping Beauty, but when we consider what a family likeness there is among a vast number of popular stories, I can hardly see the identity which you profess to have discovered."

"You have not as yet heard the premisses by which I arrive at my conclusion," returned Maximilian. "To obtain these you must go all the way to Sicily, or, at any rate, to the collection of Sicilian stories made by Laura Gonzenbach."

"Can't you be our guide?" asked Laurence.

"Certainly," replied Maximilian; "and I will begin by telling you the tale of Maruzzedda, a name, by the way, which is a Sicilian diminutive for Maria. This Maruzzedda was the youngest and most beautiful daughter of a poor cobbler, hated, like Cinderella, by her two sisters. Going out one day in search of work, he took with him his eldest girl, and as he found a job, which brought him a trifling sum, he and his daughter expended half the treasure by refreshing themselves in the next house, and took the other half home. A similar operation was performed on the following day, when double the first sum was earned by the cobbler, and his second daughter was his companion. But on the third day, when his gains were trebled, Maruzzedda, who was now his companion, persuaded him not to spend half upon the road, but to take home the whole and share it with her sisters."

"I foresee that these wretched sisters will not be grateful," observed Edgar.

"Of course they were nothing of the kind," replied Maximilian. "They hated Maruzzedda more than ever for her generosity, and prevailed on their father to adopt the old expedient of taking Maruzzedda to a wood, and there leaving her. Finding herself alone at sunset in the dismal forest, Maruzzedda wandered about till she came to a magnificent castle, which she entered without obstacle. The chambers through which she walked were superbly furnished, and in one of them was a well-appointed table and a bier, on which lay the body of a lovely female. Other inhabitants there were none, so Maruzzedda, unbidden, refreshed herself at the table, and then went to sleep in a handsome bed."

"Considering the lovely deceased as no-body?" asked Edgar.

"When she had resided for some time in the castle," continued Maximilian, "she chanced, looking out of window, to see her father. Informing him that she could not give him admittance, she desired him to remember her kindly to her sisters, who, when they had heard the news, rewarded her good wishes by sending their father to the castle with a poisoned cake. Then, on the night before his arrival, Maruzzedda dreamed that the dead lady called her by name, and advised her to try the coming cake upon the cat. The advice was followed, and when the father had come and gone, having been rewarded with a little money, a piece of cake was given to the cat, which perished accordingly. Another visit to the castle enabled the cobbler to report that Maruzzedda was still living; and he was now sent by her sisters with a hat which had the power of suspending animation. She was warned in a dream by the dead lady not to put it on, but when she received it she deposited it in a chest, to be worn on some future occasion, whereas, of course, she ought to have destroyed it."

"I don't see that, when she had not been counselled so to do," objected Edgar. "Was there no other convenient animal that could have answered the purpose of the unfortunate cat?"

"Perhaps the poisoned bonnet points a moral against female vanity," suggested Laurence.

"After a lapse of time," proceeded Maximilian, "the dead lady was received into heaven. Before her departure she appeared to Maruzzedda for the last time, and be-

queathed to her the castle, with all the treasures it contained. Left alone with her wealth, Maruzzedda amused herself by rummaging over her old chest, and lighted on the fatal hat, which she heedlessly put on, and became insensible in a moment. The dead lady, descending in the night, placed the lifeless body on the bier which she had left vacant, and there it lay perfectly motionless, but neither pale nor cold. More time elapsed, and the king of the country, sporting near the castle, shot a bird, which fell into Maruzzedda's room. Every door was locked, but two of the king's followers entered the room through the window, and, struck with admiration, called the king to join them, and view the beautiful corpse. Suspecting that Maruzzedda was merely asleep, he removed the hat, and animation immediately resulted. Now pay particular attention. The king married Maruzzedda, but kept his marriage secret, and contented himself with visiting her at the castle, because he feared his mother, who was a sorceress. In the course of three years the young wife gave birth to as many sons, the first of whom she named 'I love thee' (T'amō), the second 'I loved thee' (T'amai), and the third 'I shall love thee' (T'amerō)."

"I see whither we are going," said Laurence; and Edgar nodded assent.

"The old queen," continued Maximilian, "at length discovered her son's marriage, and sending a message to Maruzzedda, with kindly words persuaded her to intrust the three children to their grandmother. When they were all in her power, she ordered her cook to kill them, but the compassionate man concealed them in his house, and deceived her by providing the hearts of three young goats. In the meanwhile the king had fallen ill, and his mother availed herself of the occasion to invite Maruzzedda to visit her. Having put on three dresses, the deluded lady proceeded to the royal palace, and found in the court a large fire, into which the queen ordered her to be cast. She asked leave to take off her dresses, and as she threw them aside, one after another, she successively uttered the significant names of her three children. Musicians had been placed at the door of the king's chamber to deaden the sound of his wife's voice, but the names reached his ear, and on hearing the last he sprang from his bed to rescue Maruzzedda, and to put his mother in her place. The children, of course, reappeared, and the cook was rewarded."

"Good," said Laurence. "Now I plainly perceive we have a story which is essentially that of Snowdrop, with a termination which is essentially that of the Sleeping Beauty."

"I am much struck," remarked Edgar, "by the dead lady, about whom no explanation is given, and who performs the office of the seven dwarfs. She seems almost like a second Snowdrop invented for the rescue of the first."

"Now there is another Sicilian story," proceeded Maximilian, "about one Maria, who was lost in a wood by her father at the instigation of a wicked step-mother, and wandered about till she came to a small house kept by seven robbers, on whom she waited, and who afforded her protection. The step-mother, discovering her retreat, sent her a magic ring, which apparently deprived her of life, and the robbers, placing her body, with many treasures, in a handsome coffin, had it drawn to the king's castle by oxen, and deposited it in one of the royal stables. The king, hearing of the arrival of the coffin, had it placed in his own chamber, where it was opened, and revealed its living contents. Four wax candles were solemnly lighted, and the king, dismissing his attendants, knelt alone by the coffin, weeping. His mother, missing him at meal-time, and coming to his room, saw him through the key-hole, and caused the door to be broken open. She, too, was moved with compassion, and taking Maria's hand, drew off the ring, thinking that such a precious jewel should not be consigned to the grave. Maria revived, and the king married her with his mother's consent."

"Ah, now we get back to Snowdrop's seven protectors, who appear in less respectable shape, and we lose the wicked step-mother," exclaimed Edgar.

"There is still another Sicilian story about the Fair Anna, which belongs to our subject," resumed Maximilian. "In this we have three sisters, who lived together without father or mother, and the elder two of whom hated Anna, the youngest, because she was most admired by the king's son as he passed their window. Anna was purposely lost in the wood by her eldest sister, and came to a fine house inhabited by an ogre, who was so touched by her beauty that, instead of eating her, he afforded her shelter, and she not only lived very happily with him and his wife, but became owner of the house and its contents after their speedy decease. Here she was discovered by her sisters, who

poisoned her with a bunch of grapes, and left her for dead on the terrace. The king's son found her, restored her, married her, concealed his marriage on account of his wicked mother, and became father of a son and daughter, named Sun and Moon. The story goes on like that of Maruzzedda. While the king is ill, Anna is about to be thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil, and takes off three dresses, respectively decorated with silver, gold, and diamond bells. She is, of course, saved, and the old queen suffers in her stead. Thus you have the last of my premisses."

"Give us your conclusion in detail," said Laurence.

"Note, then," replied Maximilian; "we have gone through five stories, and in three of them we find that the marriage of a prince with a lady awakened from a trance is followed by the persecution of his wife and children by his wicked mother. The connexion, therefore, between the two parts of the Sleeping Beauty is not accidental. Note again; the elements of all the stories are continued in the Sicilian tale of Maruzzedda. She is obviously Snowdrop; and if you expand the indefinite period of her trance into one hundred years, she becomes the Sleeping Beauty of Charles Perrault."

"Capital," cried Edgar. "Snowdrop and the Sleeping Beauty being both Maruzzedda, the Sleeping Beauty is Snowdrop. Q.E.D."

"And look here," exclaimed Laurence. "Does not Maruzzedda, living in the castle with that mysterious protectress, and persecuted by her sisters, remind you somewhat of the position of Psyche in Cupid's palace, described in the immortal romance of Apuleius?"

SIR PETER'S MONUMENT.

CHAPTER I.

YOUNG Oliver Kempe, who called himself a "statuary," and was the tenant of a rather confined studio in George-yard, King's-square (since called Soho-square), Oxford-road, wrote home to his anxious relatives in Lincolnshire something as follows:

"I have triumphed. The gold medal of the Royal Academy is mine. I received it from Sir Joshua's own hands. My name is to be engraven round its edge. I long to show it you. The president complimented me most warmly on the merits of my design. He is no less good than he is great. You can't think how my heart

beat when the secretary called my name and I struggled through the crowd to the president's chair. My model is to be carried to Buckingham House to be inspected by their most gracious majesties the king and queen. I have received compliments and congratulations on all sides. Many maintain that mine is the best historical design that has been produced in England for years. The subject, as I have already told you, is the Continence of Scipio.

"The Academy, you know, is in Somerset House, formerly a palace. Lectures are given every Monday night by Hunter on anatomy, Wall on perspective, Sandby on architecture, and Sir Joshua on painting. In the life school the model sits two hours every night. I have seen two men hanged, and one with his breast cut open at Surgeons' Hall. The other being a fine subject, they took him to the Royal Academy and covered him with plaster-of-paris, after they had put him in the position of the Dying Gladiator. I neglect no opportunity of improving myself in drawing, modelling, and anatomy.

"I have already one or two commissions for portrait bustos, and have great hopes of being chosen to carve the monument of the late Sir Peter Bembridge, parliament man and East India merchant, to be erected by his widow in New Marylebone Church. Meanwhile, materials are so costly, and living here in the most moderate way runs away with so much money, that if you could spare me a few guineas I should be very glad. I am rather in debt, but not gravely so. Some urgent claims upon me I must find means to discharge shortly, however. With deepest affection," &c.

To another of his correspondents—not a member of his family—Mr. Kempe wrote to this effect:

"I have won the medal. How I wish that you were near that I might hang it round your soft, sweet, white neck! my adorable Phillis! I think of thee without ceasing, and always, be sure, with the tenderest love. I have still—need I say it?—the golden tress you clipped from your fair head one night—moved by my beseeching, and bestowed upon me out in the meadow of the Dairy Farm beyond the mill-stream. You remember? Surely you missed it not, nor any one else. My dear mistress is so rich in golden locks. How many might she be rifled of and yet none be the wiser: not even herself! I wear it, as I said I would, next my heart ever, wrapped in that same little blue silken case your deft

fingers sewed for it. It is to me an amulet, shielding me from evil, assuring me of future bliss. I had need of some such magic charm, for this London is a big, wicked, cruel giant of a place. 'Tis hard to wrest a living from it; how much harder to bring it to my feet and force it to pay me homage! But I'll not despair, if my Phillis will but be true to me. I've won the medal, that's something. I'm proud of it, I own, because I think it may make my Phillis, if ever so little, proud also. But I mean to do greater things. I intend to succeed. For success means fame, fortune, and best of all, the right to call Phillis really and truly mine for ever.

"I have been ailing a little, from over-work, I think, and at times feel myself despondent somewhat, and inclined to lose heart. I am but one, and I have to strive against so many. My life is very, very lonely. I have but few friends outside my studio, and my friends here are made for the most part of clay, plaster, and stone. They are cold and dumb. Yet let me not blame them; they've been true to me. And if I am faithful to them and to my art, shall I not in time reap reward?

"One friend I have forgotten. It is the love of my Phillis. May I hope that that is with me ever? That my kind mistress, in spirit, tends me and hovers near me like a guardian angel always? At least, let me believe so, for the thought brightens and cheers me as the sun the flowers. But I must end.

"Good-night, sweet Phillis! Heaven preserve and bless you, and make you love me, and me worthy of your love. I have kissed the paper just where I am writing. Please kiss there too, Phillis," &c.

CHAPTER II.

If it was with a light purse that Oliver Kempe had quitted his native village for London, it was with a light heart also. He came of worthy, honest folk of yeoman condition, who had not much money where-with to endow him; of what they possessed, however, his family gave him generously; his father cautions and counsel, his mother tears and prayers, his sisters sobs and kisses. Then he had his own stout health, fresh youth, and abundant hopes. Further, he was furnished with the blessings and good wishes of quite a host of friends and neighbours who assembled at the cross-roads to see him meet and mount into the waggon which was to carry him laboriously to London, and to bid him good speed upon

his long and it might be perilous journey. All were glad to see him set forth in such good spirits. His kindred especially rejoiced thereat, or said they did, their looks most rueful and woebegone the while. In truth, the parting was very grievous to them. He, their loved one, seemed to have taken all hope with him, and left them only fear.

He looked elated, sanguine, occupied with the future, full of faith in himself and his plans. But perhaps beneath all this moved a stronger under-current of sadness than they could give him credit for. Yet the yearnings that were so painfully restless within him, try hard as he might to still and subdue them, were not solely for those of his own house. There was affection for his kin, but there was love for a stranger in blood. He wore suspended from his neck, swinging down towards his heart, the amulet, as he called it in the letter quoted above, bestowed upon him by a certain damsel of his neighbourhood—Phillis Blair, the schoolmaster's daughter. Of her precious gift none knew save only he and she. The twain had interchanged most tender speeches, most ardent vows. Their leave-taking had been very trying to both. She had wept pitifully, and striving to stay her tears he had but unlocked the flood-gates of his own grief. He besought her, not wholly in vain, to share his high hopes and expectations. Soon he was to return famous and prosperous to claim her hand and make her his wife. Their union otherwise was not possible. They must venture if they were to win. Cupid was ever a gamester. They staked their present happiness to win greater by-and-bye. Meantime, of course, they must consent to be wretched: for they must part. She could not suggest the possibility of failure, of their losing both the present and the future. To doubt her suitor's success was to question his merits. She could not do that. She loved him.

The last farewell spoken, the last kiss given, she felt herself the most miserable of maidens. Beside her love she had nothing. He had action, ambition, deeds to do, a name to make. Thoughts of these, perhaps more than they should, lightened his heart. Hers was heavy indeed.

He was a likely-looking young fellow enough, lithe of figure, quick of movement, with his mother's large, tender, brown eyes, and his father's breadth of brow and shapeliness of feature. His thick dark hair was neatly combed from his face and

ties into a club at the back of his head. He was simply clad in blue broadcloth, with grey worsted stockings; and bright pewter buckles decked his shoes. He had served his apprenticeship to a wood-carver. Then he had tried his hand upon stone, and gained credit by his marble mantelpieces. He had executed a bust or two for certain provincial patrons, and won prizes for his drawings and models from the Society of Arts in the Strand. His ambition grew. He longed for a larger public. The world in which he moved was not big enough for him or for his art. He must go to London, of course. He did not credit that its streets were paved with gold as some asserted; silver would do. Surely he should there find reward for his toil, recognition of his capacity, and, in due time, fame and prosperity. He was a genius as he believed; he would try and make the world believe so too. He had a future before him; it behoved him to go forth and meet it.

His letters did not tell the whole truth. What letters ever do? He had suffered more than he cared should be known. He had met with care, sickness, disappointment—he had even undergone privation. His small stock of money was exhausted. But he could not—he was too brave or too proud—tell of these things. It would have broken his mother's heart to know all her son had endured. He only wrote when he had good tidings to tell. His letters necessarily had not been so frequent as his friends could have wished. But they forgave his neglect or seeming neglect of them. They felt so sure that he was most busily occupied making his fortune. Poor lad! It was all he could do to earn bread.

Still it was something to say that he had won the gold medal of the Royal Academy. How rejoiced they were! how proud of him! They had quite settled that the precious token should remain ever as an heir-loom in the family. Just at that moment he was weighing it in the palm of his hand, considering how much his friend the pawnbroker—with whom he had had many previous transactions—would advance him upon a deposit of it.

But if he might regard the medal as the turning-point in his fortune! It really seemed now that the clouds were lifting—his prospects brightening. He had a reasonable chance of a commission to execute Sir Peter Bembridge's monument. The "portrait bustos" he had mentioned in his letters home were not likely to be very

remunerative works. They were merely models in clay of the heads of certain of his fellow-students, whose pockets were little better supplied than were his own, and who pretended in no way to be patrons of art, but rather professors.

There was a noise without the statuary's studio. The grating of wheels upon the roadway, the clatter of carriage steps, the voices of footmen. "*My Lady Bembridge*" was announced. Oliver rose to receive her. He opened wide the door as she swept majestically into the room. He bowed and blushed, muttered acknowledgments of his sense of the honour conferred upon him, and placed a chair for her ladyship. She waved her hand; she did not care to sit.

CHAPTER III.

He had been day-dreaming, sitting with his hands before his eyes, leaning forward with one arm on each knee. He rose up a trifle dazzled and confused. The scent of musk her ladyship brought with her into the studio seemed to him rather overpowering. And her ladyship's presence was sufficiently disturbing. How much depended upon his winning her favour!

She was attired in deep mourning, for Sir Peter's demise was of recent date. He had been what the world then called "a nabob," who had returned late in life from the East, possessed of a good fortune and a bad liver, to marry a young wife and leave a rich widow. Something of the bloom of youth Lady Bembridge had now lost; still her charms had not yet attained the full glow of maturity—the ripeness that immediately precedes decay. For a widow she was certainly young, whatever she might have been otherwise accounted. And she was very handsome. No doubt her beauty suffered from the restrictions of costume unavoidable under the circumstances. Her dress was as intensely mournful, indeed, as milliner could make it. Wits at the chocolate-houses had likened her to the fifth act of a tragedy. She had even abandoned the use of rouge, while she had thickly coated her complexion with white paint. Her sighs were frequent, and she bore in her hand her cambric kerchief, in constant readiness to stanch any sudden overflow of tears she might be visited with. Yet neither in face nor figure was she quite acceptable as a personification of Niobe. Her graces were rather of a Bacchante type, although just now, perhaps, a Bacchante afflicted by the fact that grapes

were not in season. Her large round lustrous eyes did not seem made for weeping. Their fire was not to be subdued by tears; her full scarlet lips were not suited to sighing purposes; but rather for smiling, or, it might be, kissing. She was grandly formed. Oppressed as he was by ill fortune, and cowed by the majesty of his patroness, the sculptor could not resist a thrill of admiration of a purely professional kind, as he surveyed the noble outlines of that massive Juno-like figure. The head, he admitted, was not purely classical; but for the rest, her ladyship's physical possessions seemed to him cast in quite an antique mould.

She sighed deeply, and raised her kerchief to her eyes. No tears had gathered there, but the movement was graceful, and had become habitual to her. Then in luscious contralto tones she asked :

"Had Mr. Kempe completed his sketch for the proposed monument?"

Mr. Kempe exhibited a model in clay, removing its wrappings of soaked cloths necessary to keep the material duly moist. It was the day for wild feats of stone-cutting in the way of parable and apotheosis. Mr. Kempe's production was a comparatively modest work of this class. But, in truth, the late Sir Peter had been no very important personage—had led but a commonplace sort of career. The most fertile fancy could not have suggested for him any very extraordinary monument.

Still Oliver Kempe had done his best. In the foreground of his design appeared a recumbent figure representative of the departed. An angel with prodigious wings knelt mourning over the body. A palm-tree waved its plumes close by. In lower relief in the background appeared a ship at sea—presumably an East Indiaman—and emblems of trade with Europe in the shape of bales of goods piled into a pyramid; while Asia was symbolised by an elephant and castle, and a camel kneeling. Above was the coat of arms of the Bembridge family. The crest was a palm-tree, proper; the motto, "Palma virtuti." Floating cherubim filled up the vacant corners of the composition.

Her ladyship appeared gratified. She wished no expense to be spared, she said. The sculptor explained that the design was on a reduced scale, and that the block of marble necessary for so important a work would be very costly. Her ladyship repeated that she wished no expense to be spared.

There was a pause. Lady Bembridge grew more composed. She was able at last to venture upon a little criticism.

" You've forgotten Sir Peter's spectacles," she said.

Mr. Kempe explained that in monumental works it was generally deemed advisable to suppress details of that kind.

" I should wish it to be like him in every respect," observed her ladyship. " He was one of the best of men; but he was not, perhaps, what the world would consider handsome."

The sculptor stated that in his clay model he had not attempted any precise portraiture. He had merely aimed at conveying a notion of the general effect of the work. Her ladyship, loosening her mantilla, called attention to the miniature she wore on her capacious bosom.

" That was the very image of him," she said.

The artist drew near to inspect it.

" Admirable, indeed!" he exclaimed, with a bright flush on his cheeks. The portrait, however, was that of a very uncomely old gentleman with curiously ape-like features. Mr. Kempe could hardly have known what he was saying. Lady Bembridge sighed, but not very sorrowfully this time. There was something even resembling a smile quivering upon her fruity lips. She lowered her eyes, and gathered the folds of her mantle about her massive white throat.

" I think," she resumed, " you must really wrap Sir Peter up a little more."

" In classical compositions," explained Mr. Kempe, " it is thought desirable to introduce the nude."

" He was not young, you know, poor dear soul! and he hated the cold. He found the climate here very trying. He wore furs, and always carried a muff, even in summer. It makes me shiver to think of his being like that."

" The figure shall be draped if your ladyship prefers it."

" Yes, I think so. I like to carry out his wishes in everything. And I'm sure, if he could express an opinion, he would wish to be warmly wrapped up. And that's *me*, I suppose?"

Her ladyship pointed to the kneeling angel. Now Mr. Kempe had here contemplated a purely allegorical figure, by no means the introduction of a portrait of Sir Peter's widow. He thought such a thing would be hardly appropriate, would indeed be open to serious objection; but prudently he held his peace.

"It's vastly pretty, I protest," she went on; "but I think I'm rather stouter—not about the waist though—that's really too thick. The wings—they're poetic, I suppose; but people might think it odd, presumptuous of me assuming wings; and the clothes, they're scanty, ain't they, and very close to the figure? I'm not sure that I should wish to appear quite like that."

The sculptor hesitated. "We might alter it, if your ladyship thought proper, to Fame with her trumpet proclaiming a hero's virtues to an admiring universe."

"I think that would be better; but then a trumpet, it swells out the cheeks rather, doesn't it? And those heads? You're going to add bodies, I suppose?"

"We don't generally, as your ladyship is probably aware, give bodies to cherubs."

"I think they would look more complete."

"But your ladyship will perceive they might be taken for cupids."

"And why not?" said her ladyship. "I don't see that they would be so much out of place."

The sculptor, with rather a puzzled air, promised to amend his model. Her ladyship thanked him. She repeated that she wished everything to be of the best. She was quite sure that Mr. Kempe would be able to accomplish a most suitable work. He must at once proceed to obtain the necessary marble, and she pressed into his hands a pocket-book well stuffed with bank-notes.

Blushing with pride and gratitude he led her to her coach. She was smiling graciously, her eyes very bright indeed. Suddenly she recollects that the world demanded of her a different demeanour. She resumed her Melpomene airs, her long-drawn sighs, her up-raised kerchief prepared for the reception of tears that seemed to be in no hurry about arriving. Perhaps at most she looked like Thalia, in widow's weeds; but still very beautiful. So at least thought the sculptor. And what a warm, soft white hand she had! The gentlest touch of it had sent a sweet thrill through his frame. And surely there was something intoxicating about that fragrance of musk with which she had filled the studio. It was as the incense from an altar, or the perfumed clouds which at once veil a goddess and reveal her presence.

CHAPTER IV.

HER ladyship's coach—it was a heavy, lumbering vehicle, but its festooned, tas-

selled hammercloths were very grand indeed, and its elaborately painted panels were quite choice works of art—often carried her to George-yard, Soho, after this. She took great interest in the monument she avowed. Apparently her interest in the sculptor of the monument was little less; and gradually her show of grief abated somewhat its intensity. The dark mists of crape that had shrouded her dispersed in some measure, as though overcome and put to flight by the radiance of her beauty. The faint dawn of rouge reappeared upon her pallid cheeks, and gradually quite a meridian glory of colour glowed there once more. She scarcely now ever affected to need her kerchief for weeping purposes. She had even been heard to laugh.

Oliver Kempe was very busy. He had little space to move in now, his studio was so crowded. A superb block of the purest marble half filled the chamber. On all sides were fragmentary models and studies of portions of the great work he had in hand. He felt that it would not be quite what he had wished to make it. His design had been subjected to much modification to suit the wishes and caprices of his patroness. Still he had great hopes that altogether it would be worthy of himself and his art, and would bring him fame and fortune. Strange! he did not now add, "and Phillis!"

He was very busy. He had no time for writing letters. He knew, he could not but know, that, in his native village, letters from him were looked for, hoped for anxiously, painfully. Still he did not write.

It is hard to say when he first became conscious that a change had come over him, his sentiments, his plans, his hopes. For a long time he forbore to question himself in this regard. But one day the ribbon snapped that suspended his amulet round his neck. Was this ominous? It was with rather a guilty feeling that he hurriedly thrust poor Phillis's gift into an empty drawer and turned the key upon it. Had he ceased to love her? It seemed so. Did he love in her stead my Lady Bembridge? He dared not answer as yet. He could but blush and tremble.

But supposing that he had presumed to love her; surely she had encouraged his love! Why did she come so often to his studio? It was not really to watch his progress, to encourage his labours, to urge the completion of the great monument. That was but pretence. She rarely spoke of the mo-

nument now. She just glanced at it and turned away. "Oh, that's the marble is it?" she had said, passing her palm over its smooth surface. "Lord! How cold it is!" And then, as though involuntarily, her chilled hand had sought his, perhaps for warmth and shelter, and had not been withdrawn for some moments. Meantime he had pressed and caressed tenderly those soft plump white fingers, and received no rebuke. At least she cared for him?

Then, he had been busy casting an important part of his design—the kneeling angel, let us say—until overcome with fatigue he had fallen back asleep in his chair. He had not heard the noise of carriage wheels. She had been borne perhaps to the studio in her sedan, for of late it had been her fancy to give an air of secrecy, almost of mystery, to her visits. He was disturbed by a curious warm pressure upon his cheek. He could have sworn that some one had kissed him. He could hear the rustle of a dress, and he opened his eyes to find her ladyship standing close beside him. He looked at her half delighted, half frightened. She laughed and turned away as she said:

"A wasp had settled on your face. Thank me for brushing it away. You might have been stung. My poor boy, how sound asleep you were, how scared you look!" And she gently passed her handkerchief across his forehead, as though repeating a former action. Yet he was well satisfied that more than this had happened while he slept. A wasp? A woman, rather. A sting? Nay, a kiss. A few minutes afterwards she went her way. How he wished then that he had done what impulse had bidden him do! How he mourned and upbraided himself that he had not promptly fallen on his knees and avowed his love.

For now he could not conceal from himself that he loved Lady Bembridge.

Yet was he somewhat ashamed of his passion. Not because it involved treachery to Phillis. Love can still remorse on such subjects; can teach forgetfulness of the past. He had but to call it a boyish fancy—to plead that he had not known his own mind, and he could, for the present, at any rate, thrust far from him all thought of his wooing of Phillis. For a moment the pale ghost of his past love troubled him, and then vanished. It was powerless to cast a shadow in the bright glare of his new passion. But this new passion, how far was it pure, true, worthy?

It was none of these, as he knew. For Lady Bembridge—granted her beauty—

he could yet concede that she was vulgar, illiterate, coarse-minded, to say nothing of her being older than himself. Still she might be all these, and yet adorable. Idols of the poorest clay have been devoutly worshipped. But in his love for her was there no leaven of self-interest?

He had conned over the names of artists who had married rich wives; who had in such wise, as it seemed to him, risen to eminence. They were numerous. Why should he not do likewise? He was poor, very poor, and despondent. Could he rise, or hope to rise, in any other way than by this golden ladder of a wealthy wife's providing? So he began to think of winning her, taught himself that it would be well for him if he could love her. Then had come, surely he could not be mistaken, her willingness to be loved. She had not disguised it—had almost openly manifested it. This and her indisputable beauty had inflamed him. If his fancy was only affected at first, by-and-bye the fire reached to his heart.

Blamable it might be in its beginning, irregular and unhealthy in its growth; but now his love for his patroness held him securely, raged within him fiercely.

An eminent naturalist has described a female spider he has seen that is apt sometimes to seize upon the male insect in the midst of his wooing of her, to envelop him in a close web, and then deliberately to devour him. "The sight," observes the student, "filled him with horror and indignation," as well it might. But do not some women rather resemble this female spider? They don't, of course, outright feed upon their suitors; but they take pleasure in cruelly destroying the hopes they have rather laboriously animated. They toil to soften a heart, so that it may the more tenderly feel the wounds they purpose by-and-bye to inflict upon it.

Lady Bembridge's manner changed towards her lover. She had thawed him sufficiently, she now proceeded to freeze him.

Her appearance, as she entered the studio, was superb. She had almost abandoned her mourning: she was radiant with jewellery, her cheeks aflame with rouge. Her air was dignified, but something of offended majesty pervaded it.

"She had been disappointed—she would not say deceived. She had thought, when she commissioned the monument, that Mr. Kempe was already a distinguished sculptor. She admitted that she was not

well informed on such subjects. It now appeared that he was but a student—really quite a beginner—a sort of schoolboy, in fact. It was a pity that the Academy was not more explicit about its proceedings. Who was to know that it gave gold medals to inferior artists? Mr. Kempe would please do nothing further at present. Her ladyship must consult her friends."

Her speech was to that effect.

The poor artist was quite crushed. Was his mind giving way? Could he trust his senses? Was it to him, Oliver Kempe, she had spoken? Were those bitter words, those angry glances, really meant for him?

He burst into tears; he surrendered himself to despair. Then he wrote a beseeching letter, humbling himself to the dust, whining like a whipped spaniel.

His letter was returned to him. Lady Bembridge could not be addressed in such terms. (Her own system of writing and spelling was that of a modern washerwoman.) He wept aloud. Was his state the more pitiable or contemptible?

One expression in her ladyship's note comforted him somewhat. He ventured to found upon it the most absurd hopes. She had said simply that she would see him soon "about the monument."

CHAPTER V.

WHEN her ladyship came again she brought with her in her coach a splendid gentleman dressed in blue and silver. It was my Lord Lockeridge; but she called him "Frederick" simply, and he, it seemed, was permitted to address her as "Dorothea." He was of attenuated figure, with a white, worn face, spotted here and there with black sticking-plaster. He did little but gape behind his thin, sallow, jewelled hand, and take snuff from an enamelled box.

Lady Bembridge bowed slightly to the sculptor. His heart sank within him as he met her cold, hard, merciless glance.

"This is the—the youth," she said to his lordship.

"Ah!" and Lord Lockeridge turned on his red heel. "What a grave-yard!" he said, surveying the studio through his quizzing-glass. "Plenty of stuff to make paving-stones of."

Upon her ladyship's invitation he inspected the model for the monument, and presumed to criticise, even to ridicule it. Oliver had heart or strength for nothing

now, or he would have knocked the impertinent nobleman down with a mallet.

"Vastly diverting," said his lordship. "So this is a—a—monument, is it, Mr.—what's your name? Monstrous, absurd. Elephant and castle, and a camel saying its prayers. Gad's bud! quite a wild-beast show. And little boys without bodies—and—what! more tavern signs! The Angel and Trumpet, and the Wheatsheaf—no—I beg pardon, I see it's the Cocoa Tree. But where's the Swan with Two Necks, and the Blue Boar?"

His lordship was credited by fond friends with the possession of a pretty wit. Lady Bembridge found his remarks eminently entertaining. She joined him in laughing at the monument she had planned to erect to the memory of her late husband. The sculptor was speechless.

"I fear it will never do," she said.

"It would be the laughing-stock of the whole town, a standing subject for lampoons, a mine of wealth to the witlings. Why a monument at all? It seems to me—"

"Well, I thought," she interposed, "that respect for poor Sir Peter—" She spoke with hesitation; there was no affectation now of grief for the departed. There almost seemed some shame that she had ever been weak enough to lament him. "I owe him so much," she resumed.

"But how deeply he was indebted to your ladyship. He had the honour of calling you his wife. Common decency required him to expire as soon as he could. It was the only way in which he could recognise and repay the obligation you had conferred upon him. You still wish something should be done? Most persistent, Dorothea! Well, say a little tablet—two foot square, with a black border, and a neat inscription; any mason fellow would manage the thing for a few shillings!"

And without another word to the sculptor they quitted the studio. It was to be understood, of course, that Mr. Kempe's services were no longer required, that his labours were ended.

He was white as a sheet, shivering, fainting almost. The room seemed to swim round him. He staggered like a drunken man. He pressed his tremulous hands upon his burning forehead. Then an angry moan escaped him, a cry of suffering, and he seized his mallet and beat to powder every portion of his model. The room was filled with a choking cloud of dust. The design for Sir Peter's monument, the studies,

models, moulds and castings, had absolutely disappeared.

He had been false to his Phillis, to his art, to himself. In all the frenzy of his suffering and his despair, he could yet admit that his punishment was well-deserved. But that it should come from her hand! At least her ladyship could bring no charge against him. He had not sinned against her. It could be no crime in her eyes to love her as he had loved her. Her ladyship, however, was but the instrument called on to inflict a merited chastisement. That was the character in which she had to be regarded. The executioner does not ply his lash, or knot his cord, or wield his axe because of sins against himself. In the case of Oliver Kempe, Lady Bembridge had performed the cruel duties of the most ignoble officer of justice.

She had befooled and betrayed Oliver Kempe, as a child tears a fly to pieces, for mere pastime. He had been as a whetstone upon which the weapons of her coquetry had been sharpened and brightened, and preserved from rusting during her widowhood. She had used him as a marksman a target: she had tested upon him her accuracy of aim, riddled him with the keen shafts of her glances, and then flung him aside as worthless and done with.

She married Lord Lockeridge, of course, who wasted her fortune and personally maltreated her in the most shameful way. The Lockeridge divorce case occupied the law courts and the upper house of parliament, and was a great public scandal during many years of the last century. But with that notorious matter we have no concern here.

CHAPTER VI.

OLIVER KEMPE had fallen senseless upon the huge block of marble provided for Sir Peter's monument. When consciousness returned to him he could scarcely move, he was so numbed by the severe cold of his stone bed. His every limb seemed frozen, while yet his forehead ached and burned with fever.

He prayed for death. The thought of existence was intolerable to him. How could he bear to lead a shameful life? He had been false in all. He a worshipper of

Art! He had knelt at her shrine, not as a faithful devotee, but as a petty thief to filch the jewels and gold that decked it.

He prayed for death. But life came. Warm soft arms circled his neck, and sweet kisses were pressed upon his parched lips. "Come back to me, my own," whispered Phillis. He wept upon her tender bosom and was saved; not to be famous, but to be happy. He was pardoned, of course. Phillis was one of those women, rich in Heaven's own gifts of pity and mercy, and swift to forgive.

A legacy had come to her from a wealthy godmother lately deceased. She carried home her frail and ailing lover; enriched and restored him. He helped in her father's school. By-and-bye he occupied altogether the schoolmaster's desk. He plied his statuary's implements now and then, but he cannot be said to have ever achieved any work of great importance. In his native village, however, he was always accounted famous at carving the handles of walking-sticks. His school boasted many pupils, whose numbers, as the years passed away, were frequently increased by the enrolment of recruits, who called Oliver father and Phillis mother. No monument was ever erected to his memory, save only a simple tablet in his parish church. Still, in that respect he was better cared for than Sir Peter; whose widow forgot at last to provide even the cheapest form of record in stone of the virtues (supposing him to have possessed any) and the public services (if indeed he ever performed such) of her first husband, the rich nabob.

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